NRO REVIEW
COMPLETED

21 June 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: DDR&E Member, ABM Special Study Group

SUBJECT: Reply to 14 June 1968 Memorandum

1.   I am glad to get your views with respect to our work and in particular with respect to my memorandum to the ABMSSG dated 28 May 1968 in which a conceptual approach was described and specific assignments made. It was unfortunate that your absence from the Group meetings of 24 May and 7 June prevented your participation in discussions which, to a degree, might have alleviated your concerns.

2.   I certainly share your views that quantitative relative values for information are a necessity for our study and that these values are time dependent. The real objective of our study, as I see it, is to develop a useful evaluation tool to compare pros and cons of stopping or adding collection systems to our over-all national programs. We all agree that relative value of information is needed for our objective. This facet is explicitly and clearly defined in our unanimously agreed terms of reference. I believe, therefore, we must make an effort to establish a credible and acceptable methodology with emphasis on resolving the values of information. We do not need redirection, termination, nor reinitiation to address this problem. I believe that your doubts about the capability of our Group -- or any group -- to solve this problem probably derive from your subjective prejudgment as to the accuracy of the relative values required for a useful study, rather than an objective approach which through sensitivity checks would establish the final usefulness as a function of the accuracy. With respect to the ICBM study I am sure you would agree that even if the input and methodological errors were as great as a factor of 10 (or even 100) away from truth (or the real world), differences in collection systems of factors of 1000 could be easily and believeably detected.

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3.   The time dependence of information needs as well as of collection system capabilities must, of course, be considered. As I see it, we have the choice of at least two ways to do this: first, if justified by sensitivity checks, we could use values and capabilities averaged over, say, a five-year period; or, second, we could compute collection system comparisons for several different times inserting appropriate changes in the values and capabilities. There may be other ways to handle the problem of time dependence which the Group will come up with as being useful, credible, and feasible.

4.   With respect to your views on the problems of defining collection system capabilities (step 6 of my memorandum), this was discussed at several meetings. In general, all in attendance agreed about the reality of this problem. I believe that our Group can face this in about the same way and with, hopefully, about the same success as is done every day in weapon system and force procurement problems within the DoD.

5.   With reference to your last paragraph, I would like to remind you that there well may be systems currently funded in program package VI in the DoD which should be included. I assume you will insure that our Group does not ignore such systems. Additionally, in light of the priority and importance of our study, let me suggest that you ask NSA to forward information copies of their input directly to me. This will not, of course, prevent your review when you return after 8 July, but it might well avoid a two-week delay while you are out of the city.
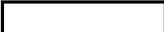
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Chairman, ABM Special Study Group

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